

The Key Newsletter

April 2026

Volume 14 - Issue 03

Worthington First UMC is a church where

The Vision of First UMC Church is to be biblically centered, welcoming to everyone, vibrantly praying, worshiping, serving, and caring for our neighbors.

JESUS IS
known
ALL ARE LOVED AND
NEIGHBORS ARE SERVED.

Sunday Worship

Adrian UMC
9:00 a.m. Sunday Worship

First UMC
10:30 a.m. Sunday Worship

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Minnesota 56187
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Hello! Welcome to the Family Light Update - where we shed some light on the Family Life Ministry of First United Methodist Church!



Even though spring can be fickle, I do so love the warmer days and the tulips creeping up out of the ground and the myriad of birds migrating through our small town. Spring is always full of activity, too, and we have several things coming up to keep us busy here at FUMC!

Connect is well into Season 3 of The Chosen. We plan to conclude for the program year on May 13. Please join us for a meal at 5:15 and activities for ALL AGES! *Please note that we are still in need of several meals for Connect and we would sure appreciate it if you're able to help us by providing food.*

Children's **Sunday School** continues to meet weekly.

The **Fireside Book Club** meets on Tuesday, April 21st at 7:00p.m. in the Fireside Room. We are reading *The Invention of Wings*, by Sue Monk Kidd. Set in the Civil War era, this book covers issues of race, slavery, friendship and kindness. Come with the book read and prepared for great discussion!

Don't miss being at church on **Mother's Day**, May 10th! There will be so much going on, you can hardly believe it! There will be special treats during coffee fellowship time, confirmation and the last day of Sunday School! **Mark your calendars now!**

Community Kids' Camp will be June 8-11! Please watch for opportunities to volunteer, for food needs and for the new adult engagement element that we are adding! This will be a terrific four days of fun, learning, playing and growing together!

One more event for the women of our church to add to their calendars is **RESURFACE**, coming on Saturday, October 24th. We are praying that this day-long conference will renew your mind, body and soul. **Please watch for more information and for ways that you can help make this event happen.** Tell your friends and plan on attending this meaningful day.

Looking forward to seeing you at many of these activities!
Serving Him Together, Gretchen

"Worship the Lord with gladness..." - Psalm 100:2a

"Come worship the Lord!"

April 2nd, Maundy Thursday – Joint Service at Adrian UMC
at
6:30 pm

April 3rd, Good Friday—Joint Service at FUMC 12:00 pm

April 5th, Easter Sunday- Worship at Adrian at 9:00 am
and First UMC Worthington at 10:30

April 12th—Terry Miller will be preaching at both churches

April 19th—Gretchen O'Donnell will be preaching at both
churches

April 26th—Bells will be playing



Sunday Morning Coffee Fellowship

Come to the Fellowship Hall on Sunday morning before church to enjoy a cup of coffee or juice and a roll, and visiting with other members and friends of the church. It all begins at 9:45 a.m.!

Women's Coffee

The women's weekly coffee group meets every Tuesday at 9:30 a.m. at HyVee in the Starbucks serving area. All women are invited to come and join this fabulous group!

Men's Breakfast Group

The Men's Breakfast group meets every Wednesday at 8:00 a.m. at the Blue Line Cafe. The men discuss shared concerns, solve the problems of the world, and make sure the rain gauges are up to speed. All guys are welcome to join us each week!

Noisy Offering

\$321.09 was collected in the noisy offering on Sunday, March 29th which will be divided between Manna Food Pantry and Worthington Christian Church Food Shelf for March Food Share Month. \$300 was also given to each of the pantries through the general missions fund. Thank you for your generosity.

Save your coins for the next noisy offering that will be in May.

Linda Doeden

Join Linda Doeden on Sunday, May 3rd from 9:15-10:15 am in the Fellowship Hall as she shares about her experiences in Laos. Coffee, juice and donuts will be served.

Food Shelf Donations

Your donations for the local food shelves of non-perishable food items are accepted throughout the year, please place your items in the wagon located in the narthex. Please be aware of the "best by" or "use by" dates on the items that you are donating. Items are taken alternately to the two food shelves.

Blankets Needed

During the long cold snap in January, we discovered students who struggled with warmth. In our community, there are homes with multiple families living in them. The kids often share a bed and blankets. When one person turns, someone is without a blanket. To save expenses, many of these homes have the heat set relatively low and the house is drafty. Older kids often prioritize the health of their younger siblings and will give them the blankets. The blanket supply at the Middle School has dwindled down to nothing. If you would like to donate warm, used blankets of any size, please put them in the box in the hallway by the kitchen.

Thank you!
Missions Committee

Operation Christmas Child-2026

In 2026, we will once again be participating in Operation Christmas Child.

Please note that we will begin collecting donated items in August, continuing through October. The shoeboxes will then be packed in November.

If you would like a list of the items needed for the shoeboxes, copies are available in the Narthex.

If you have any questions, please contact Pam Soderholm.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued support of this meaningful project.

Thank You!

Thank you for your prayers, get well cards and gestures of kindness as I recuperated from recent surgery. I am doing well.

Dianne Dalrymple

Thank you to Sherri Benton for bringing a gift from the church and thank you also to the church for the gift. It was very much appreciated.

LaDee Grant

This is our final Sunday here on 3/29/2026. It has been a blessing to be a member here for 11 years. Thanks to all for all the love and care we have always counted on here. God bless this church and its mission here in Worthington! We will remember you always! We'll visit you!

New address is 158 Kings Pointe Drive, Delano, MN 55328

Craig & Madonna Carlson

Happy Easter





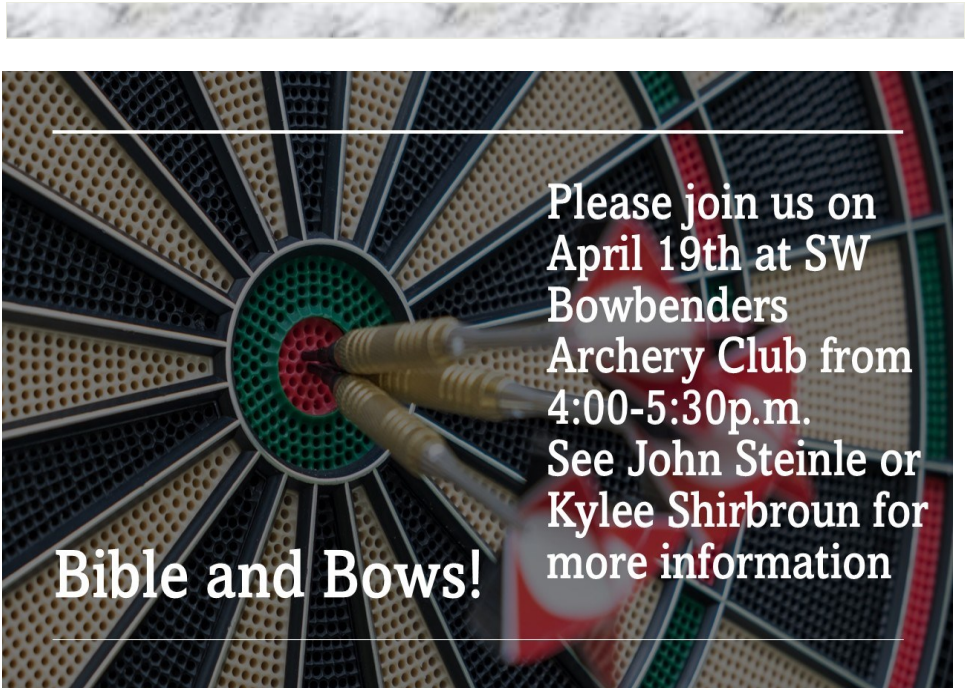
Packing Easter Boxes

Ice Skating



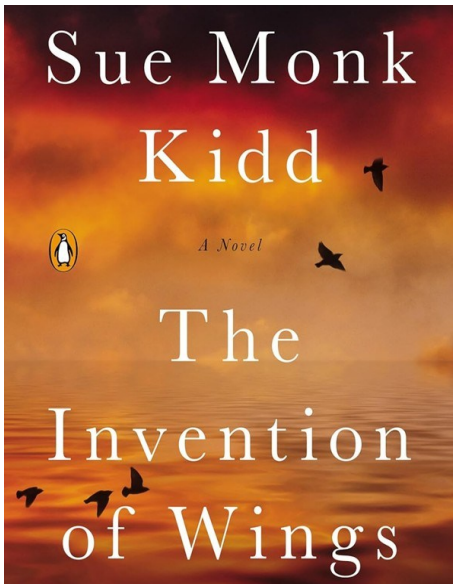
BINGO





Please join us on
April 19th at SW
Bowbenders
Archery Club from
4:00-5:30p.m.
See John Steinle or
Kylee Shirbroun for
more information

Bible and Bows!



Sue Monk
Kidd

A Novel

The
Invention
of Wings

Fireside Book Club!

April 21 / 7:00p.m.
Fireside Room
Please come with
the book read and
be ready to discuss
this fantastic pre-
Civil War era book.

COMMUNITY KIDS' CAMP

CREATE!

June 8-11

(Location: American Lutheran Church)

5-5:45pm Meal ✦ 5:45-8pm Activities



NEW!
Adult Engagement
(6:15pm-7:45pm)
REGISTER USING THE QR CODE.



TO REGISTER:
SCAN THE QR CODE (BY MAY 26)
OR CALL THE CHURCH OFFICE.



Community Kids Camp

For children age 3 (& potty trained) through completed grade 5.
Suggested donation: \$5/child

RENEWING YOUR MIND, BODY & SOUL

Resurface

A Women's Conference

Saturday, October 24, 2026

8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

First Methodist Church, Worthington



Message from Pastor John

Roof-Breaking Faith: When Love Requires Bold Action

There's something profoundly beautiful about a community that doesn't just talk about love—they demonstrate it through radical action. When we think about what it means to truly love others as Christ loves us, we often sanitize it, making it comfortable and convenient. But authentic Christian love is rarely either of those things.

The Power of Stretcher-Bearers

In Mark chapter 2, we encounter one of the most compelling demonstrations of active love in all of Scripture. A paralyzed man needed to reach Jesus, but he couldn't get there on his own. The house where Jesus was teaching was packed beyond capacity—there was no room inside, no room outside, not even standing room by the door.

This is where the story becomes extraordinary. Four friends—let's call them stretcher-bearers—refused to let obstacles determine the outcome. They didn't offer empty platitudes like "we'll be praying for you" or "I hope you find the help you need." Instead, they picked up their friend's burden and carried it with him.

When the crowd proved impenetrable, they got creative. They climbed onto the roof, dug through the clay and lowered their friend down to Jesus. This wasn't a gentle, rope-assisted descent we might imagine. The roof was only six or seven feet high. They likely had to hold their friend as long as they could and then let go, trusting that getting him to Jesus was worth the risk.

Love That Breaks the Rules

Here's what makes this story revolutionary: these friends broke social conventions to accomplish their mission. They destroyed someone's property. They interrupted a rabbi while he was teaching—something culturally unacceptable. They caused a scene and created chaos.

Yet Jesus didn't rebuke them. He didn't ask who would pay for the roof damage. He didn't chastise them for their disruption. Instead, Scripture tells us that "when Jesus saw their faith," he responded with compassion and healing.

Jesus saw their faith—not in words or theological statements, but in action. Faith expressed through love. Faith that refused to let rules and regulations prevent someone from experiencing the transforming power of Christ.

This challenges our modern understanding of what it means to be a "good Christian." We often prioritize proper decorum, following established procedures, and maintaining order. But what if love sometimes requires us to break the rules? What if reaching people no one else is reaching means doing things no one else is doing?

The Burden-Carrying Church

Paul instructs us in Galatians 6:2 to "carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." This isn't a suggestion—it's the very essence of Christian community.

A burden-carrying church doesn't watch from the sidelines. It doesn't offer thoughts and prayers from a distance. It gets involved in the messy, complicated realities of people's lives. It shows up with meals when someone is sick. It listens without judgment when someone is hurting. It runs errands for those who can't get out. It surrounds the unwed pregnant teenager with love instead of condemnation.

People don't care what we know until they know that we care. Our theology, our biblical knowledge, our worship style—none of these matter if we fail to demonstrate genuine, sacrificial love.

When outsiders think about Christians today, too often they describe us as judgmental, narrow, and angry. This should trouble us deeply. If people don't experience the love of Christ through us, who will they experience it from?

Love in Action Changes Lives

The beautiful truth is that every single one of us has the capacity to love like Jesus. We don't need a platform or special training. We don't need to fix every problem. We simply need to be willing to pick up the weight and help carry the burden alongside someone who's struggling.

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Love proves itself through action:

- When we sit with someone in their grief instead of avoiding the awkwardness
- When we welcome the outcast instead of protecting our comfortable circles
- When we give generously to meet needs, we may never personally witness
- When we use our resources—time, money, energy—to serve others rather than ourselves

The four friends in Mark's story could have made excuses. The crowd was too large. The situation was too difficult. Someone else would surely help. It wasn't their responsibility. But they refused to let their friend face his struggle alone.

Who Are You Called to Carry?

This brings us to the most important question: Who is God asking you to carry?

Look around your life. Who is paralyzed by grief, fear, or exhaustion? Who needs someone to help them get to Jesus because they can't make the journey alone? Who needs to experience the love of Christ through your actions?

Maybe it's a neighbor going through a difficult time. Maybe it's a coworker struggling with addiction. Maybe it's a family member who feels distant from God. Maybe it's someone right in your own household.

Being a stretcher-bearer doesn't mean you have all the answers. It means you're willing to carry the burden with them. It means you'll get creative when obstacles appear. It means you'll risk breaking some rules if that's what love requires.

The Church That Pleases God

A church that pleases God is made up of individuals who love like Jesus. Not love in theory or sentiment, but love demonstrated through sacrifice and action. Jesus didn't just say he loved people—he showed it by touching lepers, eating with sinners, and ultimately carrying our burdens all the way to the cross.

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When we individually commit to this kind of love, we collectively become the church that exists not for ourselves but for the world outside our walls. We become a community known not for what we're against but for who we're for. We become people who would do anything short of sin to help someone experience the transforming love of Jesus.

The invitation is simple but profound: Don't just go to church—be the church. Pick up the burdens. Break the rules when love requires it. Carry people to Jesus, even when it's inconvenient, uncomfortable, or costly.

Because when we love like Jesus, people experience God. And when people experience God, lives are changed. That's the kind of faith that moves Jesus to action—the kind that tears through roofs and refuses to let anything stand between a hurting person and the healing presence of Christ.



*Here are the highlights from
the First UMC Council meeting held
on Thursday, March 19*

CELEBRATIONS:

- The donations of new and gently used warm winter clothing for the Love Inc. gap ministry have been wonderful throughout winter.
- A great time was had at the Soup Cook-Off! It was a fun and relaxed event and an opportunity for fellowship with friends. Several out-of-church people attended as well.
- Hosting the Lenten Lunch went very well with terrific helpers.

CHALLENGES:

- Finances: Our YTD losses are \$4880.73, with giving down and expenses up, as compared to previous years. There was approx. \$8000 left in reserve at the end of February, but almost all of that

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has already been used in March. Due to the current financial status, non-essential expenses are being put on hold and all spending must be approved by the Finance Committee. Priority will be given to payroll. Apportionments are paid to-date.

Financial actions are as follows:

- Statements & letters will be sent out to the congregation regarding the current status of the church's finances.
- We will be proceeding with our public Bingo event because we are committed to it and the associated expenses (approx. \$100 in gift cards).
 - A special (separate) Easter offering has previously gone toward designated Missions, but this year all Easter offerings will go toward the church's General Fund.
 - A breakdown of unusually high financial categories was requested by the Council (such as Congregational Care).
 - The question was raised if Wednesday night Connect is bringing in sufficient funds to cover expenses. This will be evaluated.
- Gretchen would like to have someone on standby to fill in for her at Wednesday night Connect on occasion.
- Tap cards
 - The Council reaffirmed their previous decision to move forward with placing the cards on pews following input from the manufacturer regarding possible damage upon removal. This will allow easy access to attendance, giving, event sign-up, etc.
- **The Council would like to remind the congregation that any concerns be expressed directly to Pastor John, who will pass these along to the Council as appropriate.**

CURRENT FOCUS:

- Blankets and quilts are still being collected for students at the Middle School. Missions will collect these items throughout the year to be given out next fall/winter or as needed.

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- Linda Doeden will be returning from Laos and will be speaking during Coffee Fellowship on May 3.
- A Noisy Offering will be collected Mar 29 for the MN Foodshare campaign. An additional \$300 will be donated to each Worthington food shelf from Missions.
- Mission Haiti: Opportunity for 4 people from our church (including Pastor John) to join 6 others from St. Croix Valley to visit the site. It was determined the opportunities will be opened up in the following order: Missions, Covenant Council, then the congregation. Current cost is \$2500 which includes all meals and transportation. Fly out of Sioux Falls in Sep. or Oct. and spend 5 nights in Haiti. Plans tentatively include visiting the elderly home we donated to, visiting the orphanage, possible community events and/or work/construction. Staff from Mission Haiti will accompany our group at all times, assisting with interpretation. Interested persons should contact Pastor John.

CUTTING EDGE ISSUES:

- Projector replacement in Fellowship Hall is on hold due to expenses.
- Right Now media – has been paid for based on “promised” donations that have not yet entirely come to fruition.
- Fireside Room has not yet been evaluated. Repairs will come from \$3000 designated for this use by the Trustees.

Next Meeting: April 23, 2026

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Shirbroun, FUMC Covenant Council Recording Secretary

Happy Birthday!

- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Robert Horne | 13 Scott Belz | 22 Jerry Perkins |
| 2 Cheryl Dinsmore | Micah Hietbrink | 24 Bruce Vortherms |
| Corky Tate | 14 Anthony Bui | 25 Tallyah Polk Brignac |
| 3 Larry Hyink | Norma Swenson | Roger Frisbee |
| Jeanette Jenson | 15 Ellian Homan | Marjo Taarud |
| 4 Cameron Lenz | Alex Tripp | Marlene Wieneke |
| 5 Brooklynne Gordon | 16 Bill Geertsema | Jayden Winselman |
| Annika Hietbrink | Meegan Heidebrink | 27 Amber Nielsen |
| Claire Meyer | Cindy Hokeness | 28 Natalie Johnson |
| Melanie Steinle | Michelle Vortherms | Dr. Randy Shirbroun |
| 8 David Hibma | 17 Evan Swank | 30 Laurie Barrie |
| 9 Brian Soderholm | 18 Terry Perkins | Katherine Willey |
| 10 John Steinle | 21 Madelyn Cunningham | |
| 11 Lowell Carlson | Steven Potts | |

Happy Anniversary!

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 4 Keith & Margaret Essman | 18 David & Cindy Hokeness |
| 6 Tom & Diane Vagt | Dr. Randy & Amy Shirbroun |
| 10 Tim & Kari Meyer | 28 Jeff & Cheryl Homan |
| | Dave & Myra Palmer |

First United Methodist Church Staff

Pastor:	Rev. John Mitchem
Administrative Assistant:	Lori Nienkerk
Family Life:	Gretchen O'Donnell
Youth Leader:	Lisa Gerdes
Bell Choir Director:	Brenda DeSmith
Finance Manager:	Marie Lonneman
Custodians:	Sarah & Chad Nickel

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Live Streaming!

Each Sunday we live streaming our worship services from First UMC. If you are going to be out of town, you can catch the live broadcast on our church app (download to your device) or any one of four different online locations:

The Boxcast TV Channel

<https://boxcast.tv/channel/qikol6fqes2qwhperl2l>

First UMC YouTube Channel

Go to YouTube: First United Methodist Church Worthington

First UMC FaceBook

Go to FaceBook: Worthington: First United Methodist Church

First UMC Website

<http://firstumcworthington.com/>

Worship services for First UMC are scheduled to be broadcast on the public access Channel 3 in Worthington. The broadcast times are Sunday at 6:30 am, Monday at 3:00 p.m. and Tuesday at 3:00 p.m. for the current week. Worship services for Adrian UMC can be found on the church's YouTube Channel.

Greeters, Live Stream and Media Tech

We can use one or two more pairs of persons to help with our live stream media on Sundays. Please contact Pastor John if you are interested. Here are the persons who are scheduled to help with the greeting, sound, media, and live stream services:

First UMC	Sound/Video	Media Shout
Good Friday April 3	Deb Steinle	John Steinle
Sunday April 5	Deb Steinle	John Steinle
Sunday April 12	Kari Meyer	Claire Meyer
Sunday April 19	Kari Meyer	John Steinle
Sunday April 26	need someone	

First UMC	Greeting Team
Sunday April 5	Jorge & Julie Lopez
Sunday April 12	Dr. Mark Ludes & Lisa Gerdes
Sunday April 19	Ryan & Naomi Hill
Sunday April 26	Andy & Cindy Ekedahl

Prayers for health concerns:

Rod Behrends Ron Husenga
Chris Nelson Lourdes Franco
Logan Waldner Virgle Buck
Kristin (Dalrymple) Amundson
Julie (Ginny Tate's sister)
Lydia Brandt (Marlene Miller's great granddaughter)



Those dealing with cancer:

Christopher Brown Shellie Williams Mike Miller
Marion Reitsma (friend of Jolene Kuhl) Stacey White
Jeff Wachell (friend of Deb Steinle)

Those recovering/dealing with health issues:

Nancy Hyink Bill Carlberg Larry Doeden
Emma Schnyders Pat Huisenga Corky Tate
Ariana Lopez Aiden Remme Dianne Dalrymple

For those dealing with grief and loss...

Scott Lee family with the passing of Scott
Scott Homan family with the passing of Scott
Jackson/Lakefield families

Giving thanks & praying for:

Our Bishop and District Superintendent...
Our teachers, administrators, students...
Front line health care workers...
Law enforcement & emergency workers...
Service women & men and their families...Galen & Sherry Benton's granddaughter

If you have a loved one you would like to have added to the Prayer Corner list, or if any name needs to be removed from this list, please contact the church office: 507.372.2939 methodistoffice@gmail.com

Prayer Chain

Please send requests to our email Church Office methodistoffice@gmail.com or (507) 372-2939

Care Centers

First UMC:

The Shores

Larry Doeden

LaDee Grant

Sibley Specialty Care Center

Norma Swenson

Adrian UMC:

Mary Jane Brown Ctr (Luverne)

Mary Prins

Adrian Country Living Cottage

Margaret Loger